00086

c. 1969/10/28

Truth

Oct 28
Legislative
Leaders

I can't ~~ask~~
Amer people ~~must~~ ~~can't be~~
asked for support of war - our policy for peace
unless they know the truth.
(They are entitled to know the truth)

without knowing the facts

~~to~~ answer question which
trouble Amer. -

~~① why are did U.S.~~
~~② why did we~~
① How + why did U.S. get
involved in V, Nam in first place
② ~~the~~ How has the
adm changed our policy -
③ What has happened
in Negotia - over battle
front - + in V, Nam -
④ What are our choices now
⑤ What the prospects -

~~This will be the~~
① I shall give you the fact as they
are
② a principle
I can't ask for support - unless
the people know the truth
① What we have done
diplomatically. -
① What we have done
militarily -

W

Every proposal has been rejected.

~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~

~~at 38 [illegible]~~

~~2 We have not [illegible]~~

our efforts have not been limited to these public statements –

1. I knew from experience that in ~~[illegible]~~ a war as bitter as this more often than not a ~~s~~ completely private – & secret ~~channel may be~~ approach may be ~~[illegible]~~ fruitful to [illegible]

~~Every effort~~

~~For~~ Because ~~you~~ American people are entitled to know how we have explored every avenue. I am taking unprecedented step of disclosing some of the hitherto ~~[illegible]~~ unofficial & secret steps we have taken –

1. Before my inauguration I ~~[illegible]~~ tried a conciliatory (

~~Madison~~ This plan is part of a major shift in U.S. foreign policy which I described in Guam - on — .

① We Americans are a do it yourself people - & an impatient people - ~~when~~ ~~some~~ instead of ~~helping~~ ~~some~~ teaching some one else to do a job we do it ourselves -

② This trait has been ~~in~~ carried over in our foreign policy. In Korea - we furnished the arms & most of many men - to help others defend them -

③ Before a single American was committed to Viet Nam - gave the advice - Help them fight the war but don't ~~fight the war for them~~

I found that Nations like Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam - (when this they say - ~~we can do it~~ we can do it)

④ We Americanized the war -
- it resulted in American casualties
~~& to a~~ & did not strengthen them to defend selves - when we leave
- We are Vietnamizing the war -

The defense of freedom is everybody's business not just American business -

It is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened.

The results are now becoming evident -
after 5 years of more -
60,000 out
~~Enemy infiltration~~
Enemy infiltration less 1/3 of last year -
~~Vietnam stronger militarily~~
Most important casualties down - to lowest point in 3 years -
① During much of last year - they

The withdrawal has been from strength & not from weakness -

~~Draws~~
We have a plan for withdrawal & replacement - apart from Negotiations [illegible] -
- level of fighting, strength of S. Viet Nam -

I do not announce a timetable -
① It will depend on development -
~~② Any chance for negotiation is destroyed~~
② announce in withdrawal - give ~~adv~~ advantage to enemy -

The sum total of all the public, private,
& secret ~~initiatives~~ negotiations ~~discussions~~ which have
been undertaken since the Bombing Halt a year
ago – & since this Admin came into office
~~[illegible]~~ on Jan 20 – is no progress
whatever – except agreement on the
shape of the table.

[illegible]
This is discouraging ~~[illegible]~~
~~mean~~ but the Amer people are entitled to the
truth the ~~good news~~ bad news as
well as the good –

Now let me turn to a more encouraging
report. –

At ~~the same~~ time we launched our ~~diplomatic~~
search for peace through negotiation –
We recognized negotiation might not succeed.
We ~~therefore adopted another~~ put ~~into~~ effect
another plan – ~~to~~ to bring ~~the~~ peace –
a plan which will ~~succeed in~~ bring the
war to an end regardless of ~~[illegible]~~ what
happens to negotiation – It will take
longer –

The plan is called Vietnamization:
~~It is based on a sound premise~~
~~Under the plan we determined so~~
~~① When we came in – 5 2~~
~~The S. Vietnamese~~
~~Whenever we said~~
stepped up
Under the plan – we train & equip S. V Nam
to defend their own country –
after 5 years ~~as they ①~~ of –
We began withdrawing & replacing with
S. V Nam.
We ~~reduced~~ changed our orders –
We reduced the

~~2. As far as the other two factors are~~

2.

As I have indicated on ~~sound~~ several occasions ~~as I have~~
The Rate of Withdrawal will depend on ~~3 factors~~
developments on 3 fronts:

1. ~~take~~ One is the progress which may be made at ~~the~~ Paris talks ~~negotiations~~.
    - ⓐ. An announcement of a timetable would completely remove an incentive for the ~~x~~ enemy to negotiate an agreement,
        - ① They would simply wait until our forces had withdrawn - and then move in
    - ⓐ.
2. The other two factors on which we will base our ~~word~~ withdrawal decisions are the level of enemy activity + the progress of the training program of the South Vietnamese forces.
    - ⓐ. ~~I~~ Progress on both these fronts has been greater we anticipated when we started the withdrawal program in June.
    - ⓑ. as a result our timetable ~~for~~ for withdrawal is more optimistic now than when we ~~evaluated~~ ~~we started~~ made our first estimates in June.
    - ~~ⓒ It only makes good sense to keep the timetable on.~~
    - ⓒ. To be frozen in ~~on~~ a fixed timetable would not give us the flexibility ~~to~~ to base each

we need to base each

withdrawal decision on the situation as
~~its at x as it develops~~. as it is at that time
rather than on estimates that are no longer valid,

In all candor I must leave one note of caution.

① If ~~the enemy~~ the level of enemy activity
~~significantly~~ increase we might have
~~to reassess~~ to adjust our timetable accordingly.

② However ~~there is no~~ let the record be completely clear
on ~~no what so~~ this one point,

Should increase